

These Days The Schwartz Episode

By George E. Sokolsky

THE REAL significance of the uprising of Bernard Schwartz is not over big business, as he puts it, bribing Federal Commissioners with small gifts. It is rather that what Schwartz discovered is that the White House has managed to have considerable influence over congressional committees. If that is true, Schwartz, who is an expert in administrative law, it is no surprise to anyone else familiar with the ways of Washington.



That was the real reason for the McCarthy difficulty. He found that White House influence was interfering with the operations of the committee and he made a stink about it. It became a test of strength between President Eisenhower and Senator McCarthy and Schwartz lost, just as Schwartz knew the same principle. Robert Morris, counsel to the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, had experience similar to that of Senator McCarthy. Morris had a long tenure with intelligence committees, began in New York with the Douglas Committee, then worked in Naval Intelligence and served on the Senate Internal Security Committee under Senator McCarthy. He had to carry the Republican flag for the Tydings Committee.

They were sabotaging the committee and its counsel. In the first place, he found that instead of being able to choose his entire staff, many of the places were filled by non-working political appointees. As this consumed an important part of the budget, his committee lacked funds to do a first-rate job.

Then he tried to undertake an investigation of the raids that were being made upon American industry by alien capital, the ownership of which was secret, particularly to discover whether any of the capital came from behind the Iron Curtain. Nothing developed.

Then he found that although subpoenas were issued for witnesses for hearings, besides the committee, the hearings had to be curtailed, the sessions shortened, or the Senator could be found to attend. Hearings were postponed or never held. After numerous postponements, it was obviously an injustice to bring witnesses to Washington and Morris' principal duty became looking for a Senator to bear a witness for more than a few minutes. The work of the committee became farcical.

What had actually happened was that Morris had gone across material that ran counter to the desires of the White House, the State Department and the CIA and they were able to bring enough pressure to bear on his committee to establish a Republican censorship over its work. The hatchet man was none other than Sen. Arthur Watkins of Utah who, in a better-than-thou spirit, served to destroy Joe McCarthy.

Morris resigned and is running for U. S. Senator in New Jersey. His resignation was very polite.

THE SENATORS on this committee had become frightened after Canada's Ambassador to Egypt, Herbert Norman, committed suicide. Lester Pearson, then Canada's Minister for External Affairs, tried to blame that suicide on Morris and his committee. At any rate, the White House and the State Department seem to have been embarrassed by the Norman incident and the left wingers yacked at Morris the way they used to yack at Joe McCarthy and Roy Cohn. So, in the end, Morris was squeezed out of his job by ingenious sabotage.

A congressional committee possesses great powers and can serve noble purposes. It is always bipartisan. As long, however, as there is either great respect for or great fear of the White House, a congressional committee's investigative capacity is lessened. Republicans and Democrats alike, with few exceptions, avoid embarrassing President Eisenhower and what Schwartz was apparently after was an investigation that involved Mrs. Eisenhower's brother-in-law. Schwartz was politically naive to bring up the subject. He should have known that most politicians of either party sip through the same straw.

Schwartz may believe that he can win this fight, but when he brings his investigation to the White House steps, he must expect trouble. The last man to try to investigate the FCC was Eugene Garay, a very able lawyer. He, too, brought his investigation up to the White House steps. Then that building was the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Garay resigned from his position suddenly and the investigation dropped dead.

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THE past two weeks and that some of the members of his committee